



Rhode Island Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5094

www.health.ri.gov

Interim Health Advisory for School Nurse Teachers

Date: June 10, 2009
To: School Nurse Teachers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: School Nurse Teachers and H1N1 (Swine) Influenza Virus

Due to the increase in outbreak clusters in all five Rhode Island counties, H1N1 Influenza is now considered to be widespread throughout the state. Both sporadic cases and outbreak clusters have been documented in schools. To monitor and potentially decrease the rate of exposure and illness, HEALTH strongly recommends the following:

- **Prevention measures continue to be of the utmost importance.**
 - Remind students to wash their hands frequently with soap and water throughout the day. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol based hand gels.
 - Ensure that continued, adequate handwashing supplies and/or hand sanitizer are available in classrooms and in common areas (cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries). Make sure that bathrooms are supplied with soap and paper towels.
 - Children should be instructed to cough and sneeze into their elbow.
 - Children with flu-like symptoms (fever with cough or sore throat) should be separated and sent home from school.
 - Children with flu-like symptoms must remain at home for 7 days, or 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, **whichever is longer**.
- Continue to report daily school absenteeism information through normal channels. In addition, report any possible disease clusters (two or more students with the same illness in the same classroom) directly to HEALTH at 222-2577.
- Influenza trends indicate that the H1N1 flu virus will likely continue through the summer and into the fall.
- Check the [HEALTH website](http://www.health.ri.gov) for new and/or updated guidance and advisories. Any guidance that is revised or updated will be date stamped for easier reference.
- For sample parent informational/educational letters, contact HEALTH's PIO at 222-3998.

Resources

- Rhode Island Department of Health H1N1 Influenza Site: <http://www.health.ri.gov/pandemicinfluenza/swineinfluenza/swineinfluenza.php>
- CDC H1N1 Influenza Site: <http://www.cdc.gov/influenza/swine>.
- WHO H1N1 Influenza Site: <http://www.who.int/en/>